



North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation
www.ncsparks.net for State Parks Info and Events

Michael F. Easley
 Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.
 Secretary, DENR

UMSTEAD GAINS EURE TRACT

ACQUISITION A SUCCESS STORY FOR PARTNERSHIPS, TRUST FUNDS

With the state parks system managing more than 176,000 acres of land and water, it would appear, at first glance, that the 114 acres being added to William B. Umstead State Park in recent weeks would hardly be noticed.

But what is very noticeable is what that acquisition represents.

It was a premier collaborative effort among state and local government, an important Raleigh landowner and two of North Carolina's three conservation trust funds. The acquisition of the prime real estate—with its remarkable commercial potential—will result in stream quality protection for one of the major waterways in the park and will provide an important buffer against urban sprawl.

"It takes creativity to make these things happen, and it takes time," Secretary Bill Ross of the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, told stakeholders who gathered Feb. 10 to celebrate the acquisition.

He told Wake County officials, "You all are really the leaders in this state at doing this, at showing from the local government standpoint, how things can happen."

The North Carolina Trust for Public Land held an option on the property and arranged the deal over a two-year period.

Wake County contributed \$1.92 million from open space bonds toward the cost of the



SYCAMORE CREEK ON THE EURE FAMILY TRACT. property, which lies at the park's northern tip near RDU international Airport and the heavily developed US 70 corridor.

The parks system received a grant of \$2.15 million from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and another \$2 million—in separate \$1 million installments—from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

And, the family of Thad Eure, which owned the property adjacent to their revered Angus Barn restaurant, discounted the price by about \$500,000. Van Eure (daughter of the late Thad Lure) said she has been dreaming for almost 20 years of somehow preserving the property with its impressive wetlands and its stand of ancient beech trees.

The property borders Sycamore Creek which ultimately flows into Big Lake, one of the state park's favorite attractions.

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**THIS EDITION OF *THE STEWARD*
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Years ago, the family had intended to extensively develop all of its holdings along US 70, said Van Eure's husband, Steve Thanhauser. "But as Raleigh grew over the years, we realized that this kind of land was disappearing at an alarming rate. It became more important to us to preserve

the beauty and integrity of the land than to build on it."

It was Thanhauser who first approached the Trust for Public Land in 2003 about arranging a transfer. David Proper, project manager for the trust, in turn, sought guidance from Division Director Lewis

Ledford and Bill Holman, executive director of the clean water fund.

The land trust initially offered to buy the land if the parks system would commit to repayment in installments. Ledford instead suggested that all the parties work to identify funding partners.

The acquisition is a major step for Wake County, where voters have pledged \$41 million for open space in two referendums. It's one of the costliest conservation investments by a local government in land that will be managed solely by a state agency.

Sig Hutchinson, chairman of the Wake County Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee, predicts a five to seven-year window before such conservation opportunities in the urban county disappear.

"Land conservation in North Carolina in the future is going to be based on partnership and leverage such as we've seen in this project," he said.

More and more often, opportunities for conservation – whether in urban settings or rural areas – demand close partnerships based on trust, with local government, the business community and conservation organizations, said Lewis Ledford.

"A success such as this, that will truly protect water resources and help buffer the park, always involves many partners," he said. "The generosity of the Eure family and the obvious commitment to conservation by Wake County were important ingredients. It's also been gratifying to see the state's conservation trust funds again working closely in tandem to achieve real results."

From The Director's Desk

In preparing to address a gathering of local parks and recreation professionals earlier this month, I came across an interesting document prepared in the 1920s/30s by officials of the Department of Conservation and Development (the precursor of DENR, under which our parks division is administered). It included a list of natural resources in the state that they considered conservation priorities.

At that time, with the exception of Mount Mitchell's summit, the state parks system consisted primarily of federal land conservation and reclamation projects that were given to the state.

Pilot Mountain was on the C&D list, but it would be some time yet before that landmark of national significance would be added to the parks system with the help of local citizens. Some of the others were Grandfather Mountain, Roan Mountain, Whitewater Falls, Bogue Banks, Lake Tahoma, Beech Mountain and a number of rivers and sounds including the Cullasaja and Linville rivers. Although some of these landmarks have been well taken care of, none of them would be added to the state's conservation lands. All eventually fell into private ownership, some to be commercially developed.

It's interesting hindsight, but it also gives us a bit of a jolt and a sense of urgency about the important natural resources that remain available in the state. The division has prepared its own list of priorities in its New Parks for a New Century initiative (info at www.ncsparks.net). The Parks and Recreation Authority has agreed in principle to our intention to allocate more trust fund revenue toward land acquisition in a time of great opportunities. Also, the General Assembly and the administration have wisely protected the state's conservation trust funds and supported certificates of participation as creative financing for acquisitions such as at Lake James State Park.

With these new tools at our disposal, we should make it a point not to add to that list of lost opportunities.

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford

UMSTEAD COALITION WORKS FOR PARK

BY JEAN SPOONER
The Umstead Coalition

The Umstead Coalition's mission is to preserve the natural integrity of William B. Umstead State Park and the Richland Creek Natural Area. Information on The Umstead Coalition and park events can be found at <http://umsteadcoalition.org>.

Many visitors are awed by the majesty of the woodlands so close to the daily grind of RTP and North Carolina state government. It is the goal of the Umstead Coalition to inform the community of the importance of preserving such a treasure, and public awareness efforts are continuous through a variety of efforts.

The annual Walk/Run is scheduled for Saturday, April 23. The celebration is a community effort that promotes the appreciation, use and preservation of the park. Themes for this year are: protection of wildflowers through the control of invasive plants; environmental education; and land acquisition. The event features a four-mile walk/run through the park and will include live music along the trail followed by more live music. New this year are awards for highest pledge-earning teams and fastest finishers. Great Outdoor Provision Company is donating gift certificates worth 10 percent of pledge values for anyone who raises over \$50.

William B. Umstead State Park is home to several troublesome non-native, invasive plants. Japanese stilt grass and wisteria are two of the worst. The Umstead Coalition helped the park hire an intern last summer and plans to repeat this partnership to test and perform



ENJOYING THE ANNUAL WALK/RUN EVENT OF THE UMSTEAD COALITION.

controls to help stop the spread of non-native plants.

The full-color Spring Wildflower brochure is available at the park's visitor center for a small fee.

Tom Weber was a park visitor, and then a park volunteer—his volunteerism exposed him to the beauty and the history of the park. His growing passion for the park became the inspiration for a book entitled *Stories in Stone, Searching for the Soul of a*

Bygone, Rural North Carolina Community. The book includes lively stories and family histories about life and times growing up within the park boundaries years before it became a park. The book is in final galley form and is to be released soon. It will be available for purchase at the park office through The Umstead Coalition.

Several exciting trail projects are nearing completion. The new Turkey Creek multi-use trail loop connection is almost complete. This connection was made possible by the donation by NCDOT of the old wooden bridges over Crabtree Creek and Turkey Creeks (on Ebenezer Church Road). NCDOT replaced these bridges with new bridges and moved them just downstream. NCDOT is completing plans for a greenway connection along Reedy Creek Road that will join the new greenway over the Raleigh beltline and then the NCMuseum of Art to William B. Umstead State Park. Expect completion in 2005. This is an exciting year for trails and trail connections to William B. Umstead State Park.



BURN WORKSHOP

ELEVEN DIVISION STAFF MEMBERS RECENTLY COMPLETED A THREE-DAY WORKSHOP ON ECOLOGICAL BURNING AT SINGLETARY LAKE STATE PARK. IT DEALT WITH LONG-TERM FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON SPECIES AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES. THE ATTENDEES ARE WORKING TOWARD DIVISION 'BURN BOSS' CERTIFICATION.

LUMBER ACCESS ENJOYS STRONG SUPPORT

Every so often, Ranger Ron Anderson gets called before the town council in the small crossroads of Wagram in Scotland County to give an accounting of construction progress at Chalk Banks, the far northern terminus of Lumber River State Park.

They've never complained about the pace of construction or about specifics of the plans for new facilities on the tract of about 500 acres, Anderson said. "They just keep asking, 'What can we do to help? What do you need that we can get for you?'"

The town has dug deep to build more than two miles of water line to supply the new park access. A local businessman has donated space for a temporary office on US 401, the town's main drag. And, civic groups keep offering volunteer labor.

"These folks are willing to buy into the idea of a state park from the beginning, like shareholders," James Sessoms, superintendent of Lumber River, said. "They're ready to make it happen."

It's likely that the new access will be open to visitors in the spring, roughly a year after the Division of Parks and Recreation began planning the facilities. Construction started in October with the DOT carving a 2.2-mile entrance road branching from US 401.

The facilities will include a canoe access and picnic grounds on the river's west bank and parking for 40 vehicles in a clearing of about eight acres. Progress Energy Corp. used its equipment to begin clearing the site, and Department of Corrections inmate crews and volunteers finished the job by hand.

There will be low-impact toilet facilities, a small maintenance compound and 10 campsites on a one-way loop, with half of them arranged for pull-in, RV/trailer access. Trails through some of the swamp habitat are planned, Anderson said.

Sessoms said the community has been anxious for the division to develop facilities ever since the property was acquired in 1998. The Lumber River is regarded locally as a precious natural resource, and sentiment for preservation is strong despite the area's rural character, he said.

Facility development will provide much-needed recreation opportunities locally and could boost the county's stature as a bedroom community for Fayetteville, growing toward the south, and as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, he said.

In the 1970s, the Lumber earned a national Wild and Scenic River designation, and the Chalk Banks area was part of the first nationally designated canoe trail.



A 2.2-MILE ENTRANCE ROAD WILL LINK THE LUMBER RIVER TO US 401 NEAR THE TOWN OF WAGRAM.

Scotland County attempted to establish a riverside park, but the only relic of that effort is one canoe-in campsite still maintained near the new picnic grounds.

The Nature Conservancy initially purchased 420 acres of Chalk Banks from seven owners and a few more parcels have since been added, linking the riverbank to US 401. The Lumber River Conservancy and the Sandhills Area Land Trust are also negotiating for more tracts upstream and across the river in Hoke County, which would enlarge the corridor of protected lands in the three-county region.

Chalk Banks is roughly 85 miles upstream from the Princess Anne Access, heretofore the only developed portion of Lumber River State Park. It takes park rangers about 50 minutes to drive to the site from the park office.

The park's master plan considers Chalk Banks as the "northern headquarters" of the park, Sessoms said.

The river is somewhat smaller at Chalk Banks than at the Princess Anne Access, but still swift-flowing and navigable by canoe and small powered boats. The fishing is good and there's plenty of wildlife and interesting flora, Anderson said. "This will just give folks a different look at the river."

The project will cost about \$425,000, most of it for road construction. Funding is from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. There are no major contracts outside of road-building, Sessoms said. Park staff will construct the campsites and picnic facilities and install the toilets.

EXHIBIT HALL DEDICATED AT CROWDERS

Crowders Mountain State Park dedicated a 900-square-foot exhibit hall Feb. 5 with an event that included division staff, park advisory committee members, local officials and a number of local educators.

It is the ninth such exhibit hall opened in the past 10 years offering museum-quality exhibits that delve into the natural and cultural history of state parks.

"These exhibit halls help to fulfill our mission of educating our visitors about the resources they're seeing in the state parks, and they broaden the park experience for some who might not be physically able or have the time to visit all the landmarks in a park," said Lewis Ledford, division director.

The lobby of the park's visitor's center is now graced with a four by eight-foot relief map that orients visitors to park facilities, trails and recreation opportunities.

A striking aspect of the exhibit hall itself is a series of manmade rock spires that mimic the heights of Crowders Mountain and the Kings Mountain

range and which are designed to give visitors the sensations of the summits. It surrounds a central exhibit on geologic history with hands-on interactive displays.

There is a diorama on neotropical migratory birds with hand-carved models. The interactive display helps visitors to identify birdsongs. A second diorama portrays a low-elevation rocky summit natural community.

Cultural history exhibits include the stories of All Healing Springs, a turn-of-the-century spa located on the northern slopes, and two educational institutions once located on park land—Lincoln Academy, a prep school for African-Americans, and Linwood College, a Christian higher education facility for women.

Contractor for the project was Capitol Exhibit Services of Manassas, VA, and designer was Chris White Designs. The contract price was \$280,000.

The park's 6,000-square-foot visitor's center opened in June 1999.

MAYO STATE PARK PROJECT GAINS GROUND

The Division of Parks and Recreation has acquired 531 acres and has options to purchase another 242 acres along the Mayo River as part of its efforts to create a state park on the Rockingham County waterway.

Also, division officials and representatives of the Piedmont Land Conservancy have talked to 18 other landowners who have expressed an interest in negotiating with the parks system and are asking that their property be appraised. All of these properties together represent about 2,000 acres.

The relatively rapid pace of land acquisition for what may become the state's newest park is due to strong local support and the conservancy's help in approaching property owners.

Mayo River State Park was authorized during the 2003 session of the General Assembly, after the area was identified for a potential state park in its New Parks for a New Century initiative.

The legislative action cleared the way for the parks system to begin acquiring land.

All of the subject properties are within a narrow 12-mile-long corridor reaching from the Virginia border downriver to just above Mayodan.

The largest block of property among the acquisitions is 415 acres known locally as the Old Mayo Park, once a company recreation area spanning both sides of US 220 Business just north

of Mayodan. The price was \$2.47 million.

An adjacent 116-acre acquisition is the former Compass-Avalon Industrial Park, which has some developed roads, but which never attracted tenants.

In December the Council of State approved these acquisitions, which are under option:

—228 acres owned by Ferguson Lumber Inc. on Smith Road near the Virginia border.

(This tract includes 57 acres in Henry County, Va. because the landowner would not subdivide the property. Division officials said the property in Virginia could eventually be sold.)

—10 acres south of NC 135 near Mayodan.

—0.87 acres and a brick house on NC 135 near Mayodan.

—3.8 acres on Cedar Mountain Road near Mayodan.

Taken together, the six properties represent \$4.77 million obligated to the project.

In October, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund set aside \$2.55 million for land acquisition along the Mayo. This is in addition to \$2.6 million in the 2003-04 fiscal year.

Also, the parks system has gathered funding for the Mayo project from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund, the Ecosystem Enhancement Program (for wetlands mitigation) and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

THOMPSON WILL LEAD GOOSE CREEK

Kelley Thompson, who has been a state park ranger for 10 years in eastern North Carolina, has been promoted to superintendent at Goose Creek State Park in Washington County, according to the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. She succeeds Scott Kershner, who became superintendent at Falls Lake State Recreation Area in November.



A native of Knoxville, TN, Thompson was raised in Chapel Hill and graduated in 1990 from Western Carolina University with a bachelor's degree in natural resource management.

She joined the North Carolina state parks system in 1994 as a Ranger I at Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nag's Head and was later promoted to Ranger II. In 2003, she joined the staff of Jones Lake State Park in Bladen County as a

Ranger III with responsibility for interpretive and education programming. Thompson is a certified environmental educator, a CPR instructor and holds advanced law enforcement certification.

As Superintendent II at Goose Creek, she will be responsible for all operations, law enforcement, natural resource protection and educational efforts at the 1,669-acre park. She will be supervising a staff of nine.

"Kelley has always shown a particular enthusiasm and commitment to our programs in environmental education," said Division Director Lewis Ledford. "That and her leadership skills make her well suited to direct Goose Creek State Park and our important environmental education center there."

Thompson said, "I'm excited because Goose Creek offers the first environmental education center within the state parks system, and I hope to expand the programs that exist there now. Our programs in environmental education are very important to me."

MOLE SUPERINTENDENT AT JONES LAKE

Shederick Mole, a veteran ranger at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area, has been promoted to superintendent at Jones Lake State Park in Bladen County, according to the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. Mole succeeds Greg Schneider, who became superintendent at Jordan lake State Recreation Area in November.



A native of Brevard County, Fla., Mole graduated in 1993 from Concord College in Athens, W.Va., with a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation management. He worked for one year at Pipestem State Park in West Virginia. He joined the North Carolina state parks system in 1995 as a Ranger III at Kerr Lake.

He is a certified environmental educator and directed many of the recreation area's outreach programs to area schools and

educational groups.

As Superintendent II at Jones Lake, he will be responsible for all operations, law enforcement, natural resource protection and educational efforts at the 1,669-acre park. He will be supervising a seven-person staff.

"While a veteran ranger at Falls Lake, Shederick gathered a wealth of experience in all facets of state park management," said Division Director Lewis Ledford. "I'm pleased he's willing to accept the challenges of the superintendent's post at Jones Lake State Park, which include bringing a new visitor's center and exhibit hall on line."

Mole said that the visitor's center and exhibit hall now under construction will broaden the park's role in the region. "What I hope to accomplish is to let the residents know that Jones Lake is an important part of the community. I'm there to help them benefit from the park and educate the community on the state parks mission," he said.

Mole and his wife Trencia have an 11-year-old son Oh'sha and 21-month-old daughter.

REMEMBER . . .

. . . SUBMISSIONS AND STORY IDEAS FOR *THE STEWARD* ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.
CONTACT CHARLIE.PEEK@NCMAIL.NET

North Carolina State Parks

Monthly Attendance Report, Dec. 2004

PARK	DECEMBER 2004	TOTAL YTD DEC. 2004	DECEMBER 2003	TOTAL YTD DEC. 2003	% CHANGE (2003/2004)	
					DEC.	YTD
Carolina Beach	5,885	217,191	8,767	251,427	-33%	-14%
Cliffs of the Neuse	3,245	122,071	4,621	118,838	-30%	3%
Crowder's Mountain	18,992	364,098	14,928	231,593	27%	57%
Eno River	16,341	298,989	15,502	280,805	5%	6%
Occoneechee Mountain	2,558	40,853	1,852	30,397	38%	34%
Falls Lake	17,096	694,292	19,083	673,993	-10%	3%
Fort Fisher	21,631	740,377	9,899	722,290	119%	3%
Fort Macon	35,354	1,297,106	35,510	1,262,888	0%	3%
Goose Creek	6,799	140,092	6,741	124,512	1%	13%
Gorges	3,733	134,072	1,628	87,654	129%	53%
Hammocks Beach	4,854	133,953	4,326	148,329	12%	-10%
Hanging Rock	10,780	329,520	10,971	366,621	-2%	-10%
Jockey's Ridge	16,530	871,572	30,655	1,045,074	-46%	-17%
Jones Lake	3,332	99,362	3,524	118,486	-5%	-16%
Jordan Lake	15,948	939,362	11,280	742,960	41%	26%
Kerr Lake	46,228	1,506,020	39,540	1,264,992	17%	19%
Lake James	27,944	437,563	6,280	246,901	345%	77%
Lake Norman	19,818	445,275	23,067	383,749	-14%	16%
Lake Waccamaw	5,018	95,074	3,510	88,748	43%	7%
Lumber River	1,930	63,142	3,878	53,122	-50%	19%
Medoc Mountain	1,348	56,270	1,914	45,966	-30%	22%
Merchant's Millpond	8,572	197,830	5,376	141,607	59%	40%
Morrow Mountain	5,560	259,580	5,050	256,598	10%	1%
Mount Jefferson	4,380	94,677	3,772	98,702	16%	-4%
Mount Mitchell	3,425	434,374	5,655	675,834	-39%	-36%
New River	5,704	162,473	5,636	159,689	1%	2%
Pettigrew	1,632	74,384	3,209	84,112	-49%	-12%
Pilot Mountain	14,844	383,752	18,116	414,987	-18%	-8%
Raven Rock	3,831	100,837	4,946	109,109	-23%	-8%
Singletary Lake	2,258	37,643	298	21,465	658%	75%
South Mountains	0	49,194	7,884	183,792	-100%	-73%
Stone Mountain	17,984	425,988	16,532	378,521	9%	13%
Weymouth Woods	3,279	44,639	3,235	34,845	1%	28%
William B. Umstead	18,380	473,372	28,505	426,511	-36%	11%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	375,213	11,764,997	365,690	11,275,117	3%	4%

Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

and

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

SAFETY ZONE

Don't neglect to disconnect

✓ Lock out all potential energy sources before equipment maintenance or repair.

✓ Have your work crew establish its own lockout/tagout. Never work under another crew's lockout/tagout, even for a moment.

✓ Before returning equipment to service, be sure everyone involved knows your plans.

✓ Use the principles of lockout/tagout at home.



The Steward

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